

Jonathan Katz

Executive Director of KANSAS from 1973-76

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I. Think back on those early days of SAA's, when you were new in your job and the whole "field" was in formation.

A. What was the "big idea" behind the formation of the NEA and SAA's?

The reason that the NEA was formed – I believe the language in the authorizing legislation, which I think - there's no continuity between the WPA and the NEA. Anybody who thinks that hasn't taken a look. There was some fine arts commission under Truman that never went anywhere either. It was a cold war environment ...this is the key. "Democracy demands wisdom & vision in its citizens; it must therefore foster and support a form of education and access to the arts and humanities designed to make people of all backgrounds, and wherever located" – and here's the key – "masters of their technology and not its unthinking servants." Now there's a paragraph before that which says, "An advanced civilization must not limit its efforts to science and technology alone, but must give full value and support to the other great branches of scholarly and cultural activity in order to achieve a better understanding of the past, a better analysis of the present, a better view of the future." Now the deal is that this is not that far after Sputnik, that we're in the midst of the cold war, and this is initiated under John Kennedy and fulfilled under Johnson after Kennedy's assassination. This is America's self conscious attempt to present itself to the rest of the world as competitive in the area of culture as in the area of science and technology. That, from my perspective is what this is about. It was never bottom-up, it was always top-down. Johnson was a master of getting things through the Senate; it did not have a base of support when it was created – if you read the people who wrote about the founding, Charles Christopher Mark, Michael Straight, it was all about the jockeying back and forth between the arts

& humanities for who's going to have the controlling interest, there are attempts by both of them to become the umbrella for the other. The breakup is not based in anybody's experience because the experience of, the experiencing, something reflecting [*not clear: out of the continuum????*]. The subject areas are listed in the enabling legislation; there are a couple of overlapping ones, like crafts and folk arts; but basically, it is the universities who emerge with their own endowment which broadens somewhat to research centers over the years. The term "scholarly" is the defining term. It's the artistic organizations of the country. Leonard Garment's vision under Nancy Hanks, as you know, it grew 900%, and Leonard Garment was the translator to Nixon, who was the big investor. Well Garment's vision was that the thousand best organizations in the country would be supported by the NEA to a significant extent. Now I would imagine that in the United States, a "significant extent" would be, maybe, 10%.

[What about the states? Was it due to the 20% clause in the NEA's legislation?]

It would have taken a lot longer. Now, there are 2 different accounts of how many state arts agencies there were at the time. If you read Dick Netzer's (sp?), he says there were 6 which would have included NY, UT, MO; if you read Charles Christopher Mark, he maintains he was hired by the Department of Education in '65 to count the state arts agencies, and that he traveled around and did that. And he mentions in his book, 25. Now, what I have generally deduced from that is that, maybe 25 existed on paper, and 6 were actually making grants. Because one of the things that Netzer does, he adds up the money that was being granted by state arts agencies, \$2 million, of which \$___ was from NY and continues to be for a few years. I think it was Congress – I would be guessing Brademas and Pell – who said 20% should go out to the states. Regions didn't come till later, that was Nancy Hanks' innovation. And that too was an invented story by the regions, by the way; none of them even remember any more. The regions did NOT well up from the states, nor did they well up from the regions. Nancy Hanks decided there should be regions. The language that was always in the enabling legislation was that "non contiguous states" could apply for grants; it was that consortia, from the very beginning. State arts agencies were defined in the enabling legislation, and groups of them could apply for projects – it was always there; what Nancy did ... there is in the enabling legislation – people don't read this document - 'cause it still applies and defines what the Chairman's prerogatives are to do with the money, for instance; but 25% of the 5G money – remember that 5C supports artists and organizations, 5G is available to Government entities, to states specifically. 25% of the 5G money can be used at the Chairman's discretion, which means it would have to go to states, or their groups of states. The Chairman can define

what the purpose is for that. The rest of it has to go out by formula. Now, half of that money, half of that 25%, of the now 40% is used on a formula basis for the partnership agreements for regions. The other half is used to adjust the state basic partnership to adjust for population. *[blip on tape]* people or more. So it's everybody except Guam, and the Northern Marianas, the Virgin Islands,.. *[blip]* So those four don't get the next increment, they get \$200,000. Now, the way it works is that , Vermont winds up with an amount of, I'm guessing, I'm just ballparking this in my mind, \$300 or \$400,000; California winds up with a million, or a million two, or something like that, but California is 30 times the population... so the formula, because of that basic \$200,000, and the next increment being divided evenly, favors the smaller states, and that's why the population adjustment is there, so the larger states get – it's the great *[unclear]*

B. What was your "big idea" when you took your job – what was the situation in your state, and where were you hoping to go?

I moved to Kansas – there's actually a few paragraphs about this in Nina Gibans' book – I moved to Kansas to teach in the Honors College at Wichita State University, I started being a poet in residence for KS Arts Commission. I was hired to start the arts in education program and to create local arts agencies, because they decided that ... there wasn't a professional dance company, there were one or two professional symphonies. The infrastructure was so - these women were just brilliant, and they decided that - this was Martha Rhea, Denise from Manhattan - you knew most of these people at one time or another, Camilla Cave who was the chair I served under, *[LONG BLIP ON TAPE and the next sentence is from my notes]* ... these kids were going to KU and they were not coming back. The communities couldn't get a lawyer, a doctor. You've got communities below 25,000 pop. It was a very rural state, I think it had maybe 2 million people. And, how are you going to keep people there? And they didn't have arts institutions, either, and not enough money to build them. So the whole notion was, let's get all the people in each community who care about the arts or who could care about it, together; it wasn't just the arts people, as you know; you arrived, and then you tried to convene the doctors, the attorneys, the people at the junior colleges, and the people at the junior colleges were already a network. The concert series were a network. There was a Western Kansas community services consortium of junior colleges, there was a *[BLIP. From notes: Chautauqua]*, there was an AAUW. Most of these people were active in AAUW – University Women - and they were Junior Leaguers. The Junior League then supported the arts, that was before they reconceived themselves as management training for women and the arts were

no longer important to them (which actually did happen). That's why they decided they need local arts agencies, and they wanted that network. Well it turned out that there was such an interest in that, that in the times that I was there (and of course – there had been an earlier association of local arts agencies in California, and by that time it was defunct, it didn't survive. I think Mary Regan and I started our networks in the same year. We were also the first two Executive Directors who had been community development coordinators. In fact, in the first few weeks that I was in Kansas, Bob Moon sent me to NC, because he had asked me to do a statewide conference to start local arts agencies and I said I had no idea what that looks like; and sure enough Mary Regan was having one in a couple of weeks, and I found out about it. So the very first person I met outside of Kansas was Mary Regan, when she was community development coordinator. And then we both became directors, about the same time.

[So when you became Director, was there a single thing you wanted to achieve?]

Yes. There were a couple of things. One was, I wanted to have a local arts agency in every community in KS because we were building ... that's what they liked about me, that's why they made me director; because we were creating these things really quickly. We were getting calls from people who had a Christian Science Church, and they didn't know what to do with it, that kind of stuff. There was another thing that happened. There was a project of the forerunner of Arts Presenters, which at that time was ACUCM, before ACUCAA, it was the Association of College and University Concert Managers, then it became Arts Administrators, then it became Arts Presenting *[BLIP... [from notes: It was project directed by Michael Goldberg] who runs Wisconsin Union Events, and he had the first marketing the arts project in the field. I forget who funded it. But he was traveling around, and he had Informances (remember those?), he had Informances and performances. And the deal was, he would arrive and he would go into a community, and you were competing for a 2-week artist Informance. And he was going up the Mississippi Valley. And the reason he did was, because that is the way the Indians went. The Indians went north and south and he believed that there was a natural pattern that should be followed, not the east-west pattern that the train tracks made (so he was going to SD, ND, and that's why he picked KS). He arrived, with Ralph Burgard, that's when I first met Ralph, within a few months of my starting. And he arrived, and he had a few other people with him. But it was Ralph Burgard, Michael Goldberg, and myself – and I chose the communities and we went to a dozen communities in KS, and made the pitch for marketing - posters, (???)*

direct mail - and people came out and said that, they had to convince us that they had the management wherewithal to get this done. We went all the way out to Great Bend, Hutchinson. It turned out, what happened was, we picked the communities and gave them the performances. And I went back and started local arts agencies in every other one. Because the people who showed up became the core. So we got out of that single project, in a couple of months, we got a dozen arts councils.

And then, we started making grants to get people staff on that 3-year, 2-year, 1-year basis, 50%, you know. Once there were 8 of them, I convened them, incorporated them, and we hired Romalyn. 8 was the magic number. You couldn't just layer on 20% of running ACKAK to somebody who just had one person. 8 turned out to be the magic number. It turned out to be the magic number in many other states. Because 7 was not enough. When you got, especially, 8 full-timers... That [ACKAK] is the oldest continuous incorporated assembly of local arts agencies in the country. We incorporated in 1972. I believe that's before North Carolina.

[So the first idea was to have a LAA in every community?]

That's right. And then, we could use them to do long-range planning. So I did the first 5-year plan for KAC. We started the first 5-year plan with ACKAK at the same time – so we did parallel 5 year plans. The result of that was, very quickly, it was very clear: It was because of the strategic planning effort we doubled the budget and doubled the staff of the KAC. So my goal was, to build this infrastructure of local arts agencies, do a statewide vision. And my first orientation to that was to look at the art forms, to put my commission through a notion of looking at our resources and our gaps. As a state. That was my first vision. And then we started looking at it somewhat differently, we started looking at community life and what we wanted there. It was very, very early.

[So strategic planning and local arts agency planning were intertwined?]

Yes, and purposefully so. I just hoped eventually that the opposite would happen there than that happened in Missouri. That we would build up arts organizations from the community base. The very opposite happened in Missouri. In fact, they were the two models. In my life, the two models that met halfway in the middle were Kansas and Missouri. Because what I saw happen in Missouri, was, you know this story: where the [BLIP, from notes: St Louis Symphony in the early 70's hired the Annheuser Busch lobbyist] and their budget went like this (I saw this, because I was in the neighboring state): it

went \$25,000, \$50,000, \$250,000, \$500,000 to \$2 million in exactly that many years. And the deal was, that the Kansas City Philharmonic paid ½ of the remainder. So 50% of the Annheuser Busch lobbyist was the St. Louis Symphony, 25% was the Kansas City Philharmonic (and they got money from other places)...they hired the Annheuser Busch lobbyist, and 50% of the money came from the St. Louis Symphony, 25% of the money came from the KC Philharmonic, and 25% came from “other.” And the deal they made was that when the money was gotten from the Legislature, that’s how it went out: The St. Louis Symphony got half of the money, the KC Philharmonic got half of the remainder. 75% went out to those two organizations until they formed enough local arts agencies, and enough organizations around the state so they got the legislation changed so that no single organization could get more than 15%. That happened years later, this was like 7 years later or so. And it is exactly the same thing that happened in Congress because you’ll remember in the aftermath of Mapplethorpe, Congress passed legislation saying that no [BLIP...] ...that model. And of course, the distribution changed too. In exactly the same way. It was 20% going out to the states, very heavy on the operational support, season support, and that changed. Now it’s 40% going out to the states...
[short blip]

C. When you left your job, do you think you had made progress in achieving your “big idea?” Or did you change your mind about what was needed?

[see D, below]

D. What were you proudest of having achieved during your time in office?

I felt that I had been a conduit – I think of vision coming through me, the people there, mostly the women who were volunteers, who then became the paid directors of the local arts agencies, had in me a means of focusing their vision, and I was happy to be that servant. I was tremendously honored by it, I was adopted; I felt I loved them, and they loved me. I was the focal point as the director of the state arts agency. And that’s how I felt about it. I felt that 2.3 million people had entrusted me with coming up with a vision for the cultural life of the state... and my job was to get it from the people who were capable of forming it, the assembly of local arts agencies, and the strategic vision in those 2 plans. I actually left while those plans were in process, and Jack finished them up. The other thing I did, I was a founder of the Mid-America Arts Alliance, and one of things I was most proud of was hiring Henry Moran. He

stayed there 25 years and built up this fabulous regional organization. That was one of the best things I ever did while I was there, hire him. (And in another phone call I could tell you about how we had to get rid of his predecessor, and put my career on the line, because Nancy Hanks' buddies were on the board of that organization.) Starting the region was a big deal for us. I was very skeptical at first, and I became a convert – because initially they wanted a super-symphony in Kansas [*this phrase is from my notes, there was a tape blip*] That was not going to happen, it was not going to work, it was not going to be what that region was about, and I was going to see to it.

E. What was most frustrating to you?

A couple of things. Certainly one was what a low priority we were in state government; of course then, it was not just a low priority but a new idea. I felt that we were vulnerable to – we didn't have any money to talk about, but this was a time when the existence of state arts agencies, rooted in state government, was much under debate; and certainly KS was one of those states where they had very clearly created the state arts agency to handle some of the federal funds that might be available. I remember a conversation that I had with a legislative leader, I think he was the chair of the senate appropriations committee, and he had a relative, a daughter, who was a professional dancer. I thought this would be an easy conversation, but he talked about being lured into supporting something by the federal government and then abandoned. And he thought that having made a personal commitment and supported his daughter's professional life, in the arts, he felt that's what a good parent should do, not what you go to government to have done. And I had to point out that what I was talking about was, would anybody ever be able to participate in the benefit of his investment? Would an audience ever see her work? Would children's schools ever see her work? Were others who didn't have the means that he had have the opportunity? And these were the public sector values in the experience that he had provided for his daughter. And that was a very difficult conversation, but that conversation could have happened with any number of good people who believe in the value of the arts, and who had family members who were actually professionals or amateur [*unclear: participants?*] in my state. And that could happen on a wholesale basis in a year, and I knew that; at that point we didn't have a tradition of KS arts programs or benefits, so a great frustration was having to have the very most basic conversation about the public value of supporting the arts, over and over and over, with great consequence. We're all used to having that conversation now, we have it as part of our daily operation. We have rhetoric for it, and journalists are familiar with

it and they help us; we have an academic cadre and we have people in the field who have heard these things now for a generation; but it was a high stakes conversation early on. And from time to time, it still now is. But the frustration of having everything at risk...all the time, was a significant source of stress.

Plus what you would see that needed to be done, and the realization that to have your agency actually accomplish something would take resources beyond what we had at the time; the increasing realization that there really was a very long road ahead. That the simplest infrastructure wasn't there yet- in a state where we had in a just a few years the number of professional directors of local arts agencies growing from 1 to 3 to 5, realizing that you had to have something like 8 before you could have an Assembly that you could actually work with as a partner. (The 3 earliest were California, North Carolina and Kansas; and California was not continuous, California's went under, so KS is the longest-continuous assembly of local arts agencies. But Mary Regan and I were early colleagues; the first two, I think, community development coordinators who became executive directors of state arts agencies. The sense that there was that building of infrastructure; we needed a state association of theaters, we needed a state association of museums, all that professional infrastructure was very clearly going to have to be in place before we could make any kind of progress in getting program funds from the state.

The other thing I should mention was that one of my earliest conversations with the chair of the KS arts commission at the time I was hired (he was the founding chair; I came in around the 7th year of the agency) was his explanation to me that upon the founding of the agency, he had promised the governor and legislative leaders that under his leadership the agency would not come to the state for program funds.

[So did he keep that promise?]

Yes, he did, and that was his explanation to me that he would have to resign. So he said "it's in your hands now." He knew the need was going to be there, and I think it had always been in his mind, that the state should be a partner, a leader in fact, but he had given his word; and we couldn't have the conversation without people saying, "But Martin, that is not what you said."

F. What was most surprising to you?

Yes, the readiness – how many communities responded so very rapidly to the new idea of a local arts agency for us. We had so little to offer – we had a grant or two – to offer. There was a project in KS – the Association of College/University Concert Managers, ACUCM at the time, had a project, it was called something like “Promoting the Arts.” It was a first. It was directed by Michael Goldberg, who is now, has been for a long time the Director of the Wisconsin Union Theater (a great guy, very committed). Well Michael was working at the time on contract with ACUCM (Bill Dawson was the director there) – he had a project, and that project – I’m trying to remember who had funded it; I think Sears. But the project was about promoting the arts. It was the very most basic marketing stuff; it was using posters, it was using flyers, it was doing things in malls. The format was – remember the old performance “informance?” (I was trying to remember what the organization was, I think it was funded by Sears – not Community Concerts). It was some kind of national initiative to place artists in communities for a 2 week period, during which they would perform in malls, in business settings, leading up to a performance. There was at least a half-week, a week or two. I remember the language very clearly, it was about performances and informances, the notion that you cultivated the community for a week or two, and publicized using actual business advertising and promotion techniques, and there was a handbook that ACUCM created for this. And the way it would work is, Michael and a team would come to your state. He picked just a few (one of them was SD, one was Kansas, because Michael was very interested in the migration patterns of native Americans as opposed to other patterns – people always think “east to west” in this country, and he was thinking “north to south” which is very much more the indigenous movement of people and ideas. I remember he was going to SD after Kansas.) But the team he brought to KS, this is during my first few weeks as director, included Ralph Burgard, Clark Mitze, a guy who ran a university concert series at N. Iowa State – Howard somebody – it might have been Brad Morrison too – but it was at least Ralph Burgard (that was how I met Ralph) and I think Clark. And Michael. And we went to 12 different communities in Kansas, presenting to them this prospect, and we had 2 residencies, we had 2 2-week residencies to offer. This was our carrot. We got into small planes and flew to the very western part of the state. I remember the people that I met; there’s something called the Western KS Community Arts Consortium; it was a community college consortium, a consortium of community colleges in the western part of the state. I can remember the cities if I thought about it, but we went to Hutchison, usually places where there were community colleges and community concerts. It was convening bankers, accountants – people who had never gotten together before – to present to them the possibility of combining resources for a 2-week residency and they had to make a presentation to us.

They knew that 2 winners were going to get artists for 2 weeks at no charge to them. But what happened to that, for me, was I got a dozen new local arts agencies out of it – because the 10 of them who didn't win, had done the organization that was necessary for a local arts agency, and I followed up with them. Within a year, I had 12 local arts agencies. And more, actually, because people heard about this. And a call would come in. Bob Moon gave me *Arts in the City*, *Art in the Small Community*, *Persuade and Provide*... You know, there were only 6 texts at the time, there were exactly 6 texts at the time! And Bob, who had just gotten his Master's from Wisconsin, gave me the 6 books. So here I was, and I remember opening *Arts in the Small Community*, your dad's book, and it said "Program first, then facility." Program, then facility. And the phone rang, and I picked it up, and it was people from Neodesha, KS, I remember my first call was from Neodesha, KS, SE part of state, and it was a guy telling me they had just bought the Christian Science church, and they wanted me to come out and tell them what to do with it. I thought Oh no! They haven't read the book! I haven't even read the book! All I know is, they've done the wrong thing! The thing is, there were a lot of people doing that. The old Carnegie libraries, Christian Science churches, were being bought up all over the state by people who wanted community programming. One of the next calls I got was from Lawrence, where of course they have a major university, and they explained to me that community access to the university wasn't what they had hoped it would be and they just bought the Carnegie Library, so they wanted all kinds of advice about designing it, making it into a performing space. You know Stan Adams (sp?) who was for the next 30 a leader in that community. She became the director...a woman named Marilyn Brown was actually involved in buying. But the readiness was amazing for me.

Also, the expertise that women – who had never actually worked in anything that I'd recognize as a career path – what they knew and I didn't. I found out very quickly from one of the chairs of my commission, Camilla Cave, was that these very same women had built community colleges and hospitals all over the state. They had done the fundraising. They were with AAUW (the American Association of University Women), or they were Junior League, or they were doing a community band or a very sophisticated community concert series already (they were on the coast-to-coast young artists track – they had community concerts; in fact one of the largest barriers to forming an arts council was the presence of the community concert series and we were not going to be able to offer anything more cheaply than that; it was going to have to be about another level of doing things, of vision for the community, it was not going to be about a series of arts performances, because these were quality albeit young career professionals. They got Ferrante and Teischer when they

were young career professionals! The fact that these same women were engaged in leadership training, had built facilities and had done major fundraising. Of course they became the paid executive directors and ultimately their generation became the generation of fundraisers, the first paid female generation of fundraisers. You can still count the numbers now; development is a women's profession in this country and this is still why; because they had done it outside of the arts first. So if you look at development officers of arts organizations, some of that generation is still there, but there's a new generation; it's always been one that's open to women. I look at Bob Lynch's staff, for instance, and he has people who worked for Sotheby Parke Benet as buyers, but they knew the clientele, and now they're development people. Anyway, there was that woman and there was that professional cadre of women.

And there was another thing too I should mention in terms of readiness that I learned. Community life in my state was going through a kind of crisis and this had to do with rural life in America. It was that many communities could not attract a doctor, could not attract an attorney – could not attract, in other words, people who had experienced a college campus. The same thing was going on with the children of educated people. They were going to KU and K State and getting an education, and not seeing a cultural life back where they came from. This was going on all over America, but it was going on in Kansas in a very visible way – because we had little urban life. It was so much of our life. And that perception, that culture, was integral to saving communities, was not something I had to persuade people about at the local level. These people were civic minded, and culture was another facet of that that they were ready for. It was in the public sector that the big challenges lay. I could have a conversation with a mayor in overalls like any 2 adult people about the life in their community and about the arts aspects. We weren't talking sophisticated arts, but we were talking about a function of community life, and they absolutely understood that. And a banker would understand that, and a small business person would understand that. But the role of the public sector in making that happen was an alien conversation.

G. What was your agency's relationship with the NEA like? With other SAA's? With ACA? With local arts agencies?

[Did NASAA exist when you were Executive Director?]

It did. The first meeting I went to, it was a subgroup of ACA, and I went to one of those; it was chaired by Michael Newton and Bob Moon took me. I was Assistant Director. (That would have been probably 72 or 73). NASAA started convening as state arts agencies since 68, and I believe incorporated in 72.

[What was KAC's relationship with the federal structure like?]

I had a very good relationship with the NEA; I made it my business. I took the train to Washington, DC, I either flew or took the train; and when I was there, I visited Nancy Hanks' office, I visited Clark Mitze in his office, I visited as many offices as I could, I visited Senator Dole and Senator Pierson (sp?) – I felt it was my responsibility to make of our government in KS a unified advocate for the cultural life of our state. That meant being a partner with our federal agency. Looking back on it, I had excellent instincts. Sen. Dole was not a proponent; I had a better response from our senior senator's office; so it was a range of response that I got. I remember in particular that I needed the funding for a community development coordinator, I needed the funding for that. And whether it was going to be a KS arts commission position or a contract with our newly formed Assembly of Local Arts Agencies - I needed \$15,000 for a salary. I and my commissioners had conversations with Clark Mitze about that; I remember very specifically that one of them pressed so hard – cornered Clark at a reception – he came over to me and said, “I’m giving you the position, but I really don’t want to have that conversation again with her!” But KS’ conversations with the NEA were very, very productive. Nancy Hanks loved – you know I would arrive and I would have (and here’s a loop: Rebecca Blunk was the daughter of one of my commissioners, Bob Blunk, from Pittsburgh, KS, a teacher of industrial arts and design at Pittsburgh State College in KS – I first met her when I was a visiting poet in the schools, she was about 16 I think. And I was giving a reading on the campus.) Rebecca became an artist in residence; one of the things her residency produced – I’m pretty sure it was she - was an illustrated book of poems, there were several years of poet in residence there, and she was a visual artist in residence – they produced illustrated books of poems from Pittsburgh, KS. They were big – they were more than twice the size of a regular page of paper – they were the size of a big Golden book with page illustration, construction paper illustrations. But they were really a great item, and they were heavy. And I carried a couple of those to Nancy Hanks, and left them, and she loved them! Because when she would visit Congress it was the kind of thing she would have with her and put on a desk. I learned that from her, have a thing to hold up and show,. My visits were extremely productive; I got appointed to the theater program – I had no background in theater! Because I was from Kansas, and the Executive Director they knew. And because there

was so much turnover at that time, within a couple of years in my 6-state region I was the senior. That was another thing: you asked about the relationship with the NEA: I was on the founding Executive Committee of Mid America Arts Alliance. At that time there was only 1 Executive Director who was going to be on that Executive Committee, and I was elected to be it. There were only 6 of us on that committee including a university president, the head of the Kansas City Association of Trusts & Foundations Homer Wadsworth; Woody Varner from the U of NE and a few other people who, if I gave it a little thought, I could name them all. That's another example of my relationship with the NEA; I was involved in the founding of MAAA which was an initiative of Nancy Hanks - all the regions were. (And they did NOT bubble-up, they were top down. Everybody likes to tell the story about how they created their region. Nancy Hanks decided that there would be regions, and then asked one of her favorite colleagues, Dick Collins who was the Maine Executive Director to be the director in the Rocky Mountain Federation.). She knew Homer Wadsworth, Woody Varner, and made this Executive Committee. In any case, this was happening, this was going on. I was a consultant for the Great Lakes Arts Alliance, which ultimately merged with TUMRAC, the Upper Midwest Regional Arts Council, to become Arts Midwest. The consultants were Anthony Tierney and myself; Anthony was at the time the S. Arts Federation director. And of course Bob Moon became the consultant to found the New England Foundation, NEFA.

[What about ACA and the other states?]

The other states were important, especially Missouri, which was our neighbor, and which was going about its business in the very opposite way. The very opposite way. In fact if you were to look back at any history of state arts agencies that I would ever write, I would cite KS and MO as the two polar opposites. Ultimately, they met kind of in the middle. But, in the growth of the state arts agency worked exactly opposite. In KS, we had no institutions to speak of (we had the Wichita Symphony, the KC Philharmonic was a Missouri Institution though we toured it in KS, and in fact that was a matter of significant controversy in Kansas, and a good deal of harsh language between legislators in my initial conversations, because we had used a significant portion of our funds to tour the KC Philharmonic throughout Kansas. And whereas the communities loved that, because they got something of the quality that made them feel very important, from a legislative perspective we had taken Kansas money and spent it on an out-of-state institution and why did we do that? What weren't we touring the Wichita Symphony? Which people weren't that interested in touring, and which they weren't prepared to tour as we know it. But KS – we

didn't have a company that paid dancers, we did not have a resident company that paid actors – we had the Continental Theater company that went under a couple of years later which was a touring theater operation, much funded by the KAC – it was a good vision, very much the brainchild of the chair of the arts commission. The founding chair of the KAC had been the treasurer of the Wichita community theater, and he knew theater, and his notion was we could get a low-cost theater to tour around, and make it a professional theater. Ultimately, it was just too expensive. My point is, we had no professional institutions, and it was the vision of a cadre, half a dozen, of the very competent women leaders on the KAC that we were going to create local arts agencies, which they IMAGINED! These weren't people who knew about local arts agencies, they didn't learn about them in graduate school; they imagined them! They imagined that people in the community would get together and create a cultural life. They were thinking “gap programming,” basically, as we have a term for it now, but they knew that there were things that weren't there, and that they needed to happen, and that ultimately there'd be more collaboration among these groups. [unintelligible]...environmental planning or soundscape. And that's what we did.

[END OF SIDE 1 – LONG PAUSE at the start of SIDE 2]

One of our first initiatives was salary matching and professional leadership to local arts agencies and then convening the people in those positions and cultivating them as a statewide group. And of course I had been that person before I was the director. As an internal person. We all agreed that having an association, and having it have a life of its own, that we could foster, was a good thing. Ultimately, we thought, that they [the Assembly] would grow arts organizations, the local arts agencies and the assembly. We didn't have organizations that would grow local arts agencies; we were going to have to do that. The mass and density wasn't there. But we believed that a generation hence, they would grow professional arts organizations.

Now in Missouri, they had the St Louis Symphony and the Kansas City Philharmonic, both nationally visible; in fact, the first program that the half-dozen people convened as the founding Executive Committee of the mid-America Arts Alliance wanted to do, was to create a regional symphony; it was my sorry job to explain to them that this wasn't going to happen. They were stunned to find that the state arts agencies and the local symphonies were not going to welcome this, that there was going to be resistance to it, and they would have to do some other things. There is a lot of story about the first regional efforts; I put my career on the line in a couple of different ways . I

almost didn't have a career in this field because of my very strong feelings about what a region – about Kansas' relationship to a region and to the NEA.

[And how was that different from what the other 5 on the Executive Committee saw?]

Well, they had the vision of creating nationally competitive institutions that would then tour the region and tour the country; what I needed to do was build capacity – I didn't have people who could sponsor a tour! I could see the region bringing Joffrey in, but Joffrey could only play in Wichita, Kansas City KS, and maybe Topeka; but Joffrey 2 I could find a dozen communities for. I was interested in a mid-level tier to build my sponsoring capacity, and that wasn't at all their vision. Their vision was to bring over Peruvian Gold, create crying for a vision. A place where our visions met was in touring probably the earliest national quilt exhibit. I had places that could do that. But the notion of doing something big, and regional, and national centrally out of the region conflicted with the vision I had to represent, and ultimately I was going to be willing to pull KS and I made that very clear.

[Did they soften?]

An Executive Director had to change. When Henry came in, who was not the first executive director, but when Henry came in, he persuaded me – he met me halfway. He figured out ways to help me build capacity of not only my sponsoring, but of the Wichita Symphony to tour, for instance. He would help me build the capacity of my majors to tour, and build up my sponsoring capacity. And he convinced me that the major national groups would build a sponsoring capacity in my 4 largest places and model it for the smaller communities.

[Did that happen?]

Yes. Henry had been told – you can talk with him now and he'll still tell you – that

[that “Katz was trouble”?]

Exactly. But I became a great advocate of his.

[What about ACA?]

Well ACA – they were extremely significant, first of all, but not in the way that people think of them now. They were one of the only organizations that could have a national convening in the arts that crossed any boundaries: they were the only organization at the time that I can recall that would put forth an idea as its central organizing reason for meeting. The American Symphony Orchestra League could meet, the American Association of Museums could meet; and they were about their institutions. But “adaptive reuse” was an ACA meeting, a national convening. And it was extremely influential. It would produce a book, a vision; business people would attend, NY people would attend.

The other thing is: They had a conference in the 70’s that was about supporting individual artists; at a time when very few state arts agencies were actually making grants, very few foundations were. And it became a thing that you did. I think that it was very much influenced by a national ACA meeting about supporting individual artists. How you would do it, why you would do it, what it looked like. Residencies. So they would put forth a programming idea, and that was the place you could go – very influential.

It was, however, a club, and that was very much perceived by the field. It was John Everitt, Milton Rhodes, Michael Newton, Ralph Burgard – it was always those people who did the workshops and made the speeches. Winnie Scott. It was a group of people who WERE influential, who WERE insightful, the Winston-Salems and the Quincys, St. Louis –they were mostly urban. They were an early network but not really perceived as an open network; perceived as a club. That was a source of frustration and that as much as anything drove away NASAA and then NALAA.

I can’t name a service that we got besides the convening. We convened, and Michael Newton was literally secretary of the N. American Assembly of State & Provincial Arts Councils. The Canadians were involved at that point, the provinces. But when our relationship with the NEA started being a factor, I don’t think there was any leverage using ACA because they were “in with” the NEA. We wanted flexibility in arts education programs, some say in who became chair of the NEA, and that couldn’t have been done thru ACA. The single best person to talk about this is Bob Sheets, he is much more knowledgeable about this.

Let me loop back and talk about Missouri, what they did ... let me see if I have finished with ACA. Maybe I have. I couldn’t identify a “service”.

[Their publications at the time were mostly conference proceedings, weren’t

they?

Yes, and they were very influential. But again, they were proceedings of “the club.”

[Digression, recollecting particular people.]

Let me loop back to MO. The way that MO’s arts council grew – remember that Thomas Hart Benton was a legislator and there was a famous anecdote – he said something that implied that the Legislature was either ignorant sons of bitches or dumb sons of bitches, he didn’t imply it, he said it on the floor, and insulted them into starting this arts council. But, having done that, the budget stagnated until the St. Louis Symphony went partners with the Kansas City Philharmonic and hired the Annheuser Busch lobbyist. Their budget then grew in a prescribed ratio, it was a model for the rest of us. Half of the money came from the St. Louis Philharmonic, a quarter of it came from the Kansas City Philharmonic (the St. Louis Symphony, rather), and a quarter from other sources. The budget grew in successive years – check it out, I can probably retrieve the data - \$25,000, \$50,000, \$250,000, \$500,000, \$2,000,000 in about 4-5 years because they had lobbyists. The ratio of the money went out in the same ratio, so that half the budget of the state arts agency went to the St Louis Symphony, a quarter to the Kansas City Philharmonic, and a quarter to everybody else. Until years down the road, the arts organizations in St. Joe, Sedalia, the local arts agencies that sprang up, got the political clout to pass legislation – in fact it’s exactly what the NEA did for the same reason - that no single organization could get more than 15% and that became the grant that the St Louis Symphony got. The point was, they grew out of - their majors provided the horses to pull the wagon of the local arts movement and the local arts agency movement, both of those; eventually, they had a nice cadre of local arts agencies, and an assembly kind of early on – I think they were one of the agencies predating the NEA, so they were on the books. They were making grants. They had Persuade and Provide, they had the a model of a big local arts agency, they also had the dance festival in St. Louis, and of course if you go really back they had at the turn of the century [20th century] 100,000 people coming out for a festival. Do you remember that?

[It was Percy MacKaye and the American Pageant Movement. The Masque of St. Louis.]

Yes, the Masque of St. Louis. Which predated by maybe 15 years or so Vachel Lindsay. That I always saw as the opposite model. In fact Clark Mitze in his

capacity as director of the Federal-State partnership program, when I was a new Executive Director, brought all the Executive directors of state arts agencies at the NEA's expense, to the Statler-Hilton here in Washington DC, the nicest hotel any of us had stayed at, and gave us the workshop on The Missouri Miracle. That was the model we learned.

[I heard that Clark was very receptive to what the states wanted to do. Was that your experience too?]

Yes, it was. My priority was community development, and he was responsive to that.

H. [this can be a probe question from g above] What was the single biggest issue or challenge the SAA field had vis a vis the federal government, the regionals, other states, the local arts agencies?

I had such good working relationships - there were eventually challenges that had to do with state arts agencies as grantees. For NASAA, one of the challenges was there was great skepticism about service organizations at the NEA for a couple of reasons. One of the challenges was, that the NEA did not see itself as interventionist, as a leadership agency. They would not use that term. Leadership was not in their vocabulary; certainly "intervention" was not in their vocabulary - they were very cognizant of the enabling legislation, in which they were not allowed to intervene in an organization, that language is in there from the very beginning: that the NEA cannot influence the management of its grantees - I think that's in 5-C. But the programs were created responsibly. They didn't create programs to intervene in certain ways; they did PROJECTS to foster things, like they would foster the poets in schools in Illinois, they would make a grant to the National Governors Association (in fact, I think that early grants went to the National Governors Assoc., the National Conference of State Legislators), but it was for projects. I believe that; I could be wrong about that. But certainly other things were projects: there was the notion of the "Raft Down The Mississippi River." Remember that the regions, the regional language, predates the regions - that states "or combinations of states" could always be funded for programs; but the original vision of that, that pre-dates Nancy Hanks, was multi-state collaborations. So across borders, or down rivers, or where states meet, for programmatic stuff. You would have those projects. You could probably retrieve some of those.

Nancy used that language. It said it could be contiguous or non-contiguous; to this day you could have a region of non-contiguous ... in fact, you do. And states moved back and forth: Iowa changed regions, Arkansas changed regions, Texas has changed. In fact, Texas, if I'm not mistaken, is thinking of being in more than one region.

They [*the NEA*] was reluctant to do anything systematic, fund an arts service organization for instance, and that persisted a long time. The test of whether it was a good grant or not was whether it got dollars into the hands of artists. Of course here was the perception that the function of the NEA was to fund a significant portion of the budgets of "the best arts organizations in the US." And I, as a state that was working from the community up, felt that my avenues were limited. I could work out of the federal-state partnership program (which was a program about infrastructure); but everybody else was talking about funding artists and funding arts organizations, but that wasn't going to get the job done in my state. My state's arts organizations weren't going to be competitive. And this ultimately played out, the NEA paid the price for that; because at the time of the Mapplethorpe controversy and the Serrano controversy, they were missing, still, more than 80 congressional districts – I did the count - and when you look at the legislation that followed that, it was not only to curtail their ability to do operational support and season support, and have mid-project accountability and that kind of thing, but it was all about no state can get more than 15%, we want geographic representation on the national council, we're going to double the percentage to state arts agencies and regions. It was all because of what was then perceived as a distributive need and a distributive failure. Recognize also - Ivey turned that corner with Challenge America which was a distributive program; however when Gioa came in, he quoted to me that the Endowment was still more than 80 districts short which was the same number of districts that it was short before. I haven't gone back and checked it, but I do believe it. And he started off making \$25,000 grants to symphonies; he was "filling in the blanks" with quality programs. From my perspective, between Ivey's work and Gioa's work – Gioa has told me percent is, he funds something in a neighboring district that performs in that hundredth district.

- I. *Can you think of an anecdote that tells us something about the arts in the political climate of your state at that time? Can you tell us who – if anyone – was a special political ally to you in those days (the governor? A legislator?)*

A couple of them. When you didn't have a history, how you were going to get continuity was the big challenge. I was hired under Governor Docking (who and he was succeeded by Gov Bennet (a R) and my council changed totally. My question was: how do I ensure continuity from admin to admin, build ownership. I had some success fostering personal relationships full of trust; my experience with the KS legislators (inspiring to me) was that they would look at an issue; they were not dogmatic, they were not ideologues. was a Democrat) – I believe I had 11 Democrats and 1 Republican on my commission – and he was succeeded by Governor Bennett who was a Republican. And the next week I had 11 Republicans and 1 democrat. And my question was, how do I keep a leadership cadre, how do I ensure continuity from administration to administration, how do I build ownership in a shift of that magnitude? That was certainly a challenge.

I had some success fostering personal relationships that were full of trust. My experience with the KS legislators, which was inspiring to me, was they would look at an issue – they were not dogmatic, they were not ideologues – they would look at an issue on its merits. I remember a great leader in the Senate , very influential, named Ross Doyen. His district was around Concordia, KS, and I had a commissioner, Christine Peck, whose husband was the banker in Concordia, and she arranged a conversation for me with Ross Doyen. He was in a position to be very influential, positive or negative. This was a community of, I think, 4,000 people. And he talked to me about drug programs, he talked to me about the issues that faced the state; I talked to him about the resource that cultural activities could be and the work that his banker and his arts council director were doing. And he was a guy who told me that when he faced agricultural issues, he grew up on a farm, and he walked into a field and took a look. And when he wanted to see how a drug program was working, he visited a drug rehab facility. And he was going to “give this a look.” I knew principles of government before I went to KS, but I came to love them there.

There was another thing about Kansas politics I should mention which was that we could at any time have been broken by a single image or a controversy, and my commissioners were very much aware of that. The founding commission that I worked for had made a promise to the Governor: he was concerned that they might fund things that would embarrass him and KS state government. And I discovered that they had each had conversation with him about that. And on occasion, that did play out. They would not fund something that they recognized was of a superior artistic quality but could be viewed as offensive to many and embarrassing to the governor or to state government – something that might involve, for instance, nudity. And also things that would take place in

a church. There was a particular grant – I remember it, because it was my first meeting as Executive Director, I had just become Executive Director – they had an application for a performance of St Matthew’s passion in a church at Easter time, I recall it was in Dodge City – it was my professional opinion, for what it was worth – this kid’s opinion! - that this was really not appropriate for state funding, being an experience of worship. And it was pointed out to me that it was an arts experience, and I asked the question, was it an arts experience that they could fund it at another time of the year or in another venue. And they responded [*unintelligible*] And a commissioner said it was ecumenical, that anybody of any persuasion or belief or nonbelief was welcome into the house of workshop at that time, and also that it was the only venue that was suitable for that work, that it was in fact a work of praise and it was appropriate for the context. We had a heart to heart conversation about it, at the end of which they said, “Are you going to be OK with this, Jonathan?” because they really believed in this project, that it should be funded, and it was not a conflict for them. I said, “I have to tell you I am not persuaded, but I also understand the perspective and the values that you bring to this process, and I respect them, and I also want you to understand that I work for you and that you are the stewards – I didn’t use the word “stewards” – that you are the representatives of our state and there is an authority that you have that I cannot supercede.” And my relationship with them was different with them after that; different for the better. That conversation established a level of trust I think. At the next magazine where I was going to have to explain to people involved in a literary publication that they didn’t get a grant for that period, they were going to trust me with saying something politic (that was not the real reason), they were going to trust me with their relationship with a grantee in a community. Those two things I think built our relationship. Actually the conversation with the literary magazine was more difficult for me. Because with the other one, everything was true. But here I felt that I really couldn’t; I had had a privileged conversation, and my ability to do the job they were asking me to do required honoring that privilege which meant not having an honest conversation with a constituent. And that’s a slippery slope. You can write a tragedy based on that premise!

J. How did you use your time:

1. Can you describe a prototypical day?

When I started out, it was Bob Moon and a secretary and me, and then it was me and a secretary and somebody else. But I doubled the staff shortly, and then I had the local arts agency to work with. But a typical day ... I always read things. (When I came to NASAA I had to change that habit, because after the first couple of years there was so much to read I could no longer do that and so I started filing it – and now that has to stop! As we talk, we are about to change the carpet here, so here are about 60 boxes of variously organized materials – paper.) And spending the first hour looking at my phone messages, the mail, checking in with my staff, was an early habit. Information-gathering was the first thing I would do; I came out of both a literate tradition and a scholarly background. I have this real drive to be fact-based in the things that I say. I've always thought that – the people I was dealing with, especially – in my early career – the people who were critical to me had very little arts background and the people that were my staunchest advocates often had what we would now describe as a regional or parochial background in the arts (not a liberal arts education). My closest supporters, my commission members, were not opera aficionados, or symphony aficionados or dance aficionados – they had to travel long distances to see any of those things. We didn't have those in our state. They might have seen them in college or during travel but they were not steeped in those traditions, and some of them, I had only a gloss; but my legislators were very much in the traditional mold of legislators – they were bankers and farmers. Remember that in 1970-90 the number of art teachers was reduced by half, literally, from 40,000 to 20,000 according to census bureau figures and that had already begun. The opportunities even in the schools were not growing at the time. So I always felt that to persuade people who didn't have the experience, you had to be talking facts, personal benefits as well as public benefits. The conversation right now – where you go from “art is good” to “public sector support of art is good” to “state government support of art is good” or “local government support of art is good” – that's third tier, and this was first tier stuff – “You know, art is uplifting.” If I had said “quality of life” to most of the people I talked with in my position as a new director, people would have said “What do you mean?” In the same kind of experience you had in Spring Green where more people realized they DID like people, right, one of the findings was, people liked it because they had a name for it, they knew what it was.

2. *In a typical year at the beginning, can you give a general idea of how your time divided (in percents, roughly):*

grant administration It was a lot about grant administration. What we tend to forget now was just how onerous just filling

out the forms was! When I was Director, during my first year, Texas Instruments invented the adding machine with the readout. Because what I remember, the year before that, I had columns – I did the budgeting and the NEA Basic State Application, and what I had was 14 columns x 14 columns, and when I changed a number, I got an eraser and had all the numbers – that column down, that column across, then the final columns down and the final columns down – changed when you found another receipt. You're talking about manual double-entry bookkeeping! The object of expenditure, the object of activity, the different breakouts. So much of time went into the actual paperwork not to mention the grant applications and the processing of that, which you did physically by book. And of course, the traveling – there weren't regional hubs – there was a long time when I came in for panel meetings (I was appointed to the theater program) they would have them over 2 weekends and I would stay there! Other people were able to go back, but I was from Kansas and it was really expensive to fly back and forth a couple of times to where I would have to fly back and forth. It was a lot less expensive to take a train, and stay there. Anyway grant administration was a lot of time. Meeting with constituents ... I spent a lot of time on the road, I spent a lot of time with constituents because I was meeting them. I continued local arts agency work, even when I hired Romalyn, because we both had to travel around the state and meet people. At that time it was face-to-face; you could have a telephone conversation with somebody after you met them. And I was there for 4 years; nobody had been there for 4 years, people were there for a year or 2.

advocacy/lobbying with public There really wasn't any distinction between lobbying with the public and field communication. They couldn't lobby for you unless they found out about you. And simply explaining what resources you had and how it happened, you were doing advocacy. And there wasn't anything organized at the beginning. I moved the office from Wichita to Topeka, I moved the office to the capitol so I could lobby. Bob [Moon] probably didn't mention this, but for a variety of reasons, some of them personal, he had made a commitment to keep the office in Wichita. And he knew the time had come when it had to go to Topeka. I negotiated the contract and picked the site, and raced a tornado up and raced a tornado down from Wichita to Topeka to look at space – literally – the highway from Wichita to Topeka was tornado alley, it was a SW to NE highway and that's how the tornados go.

field/constituency communication.

agency strategic planning

We called it long range

planning and we used the word “strategic.” I had been to a workshop that Brad Morrison had done, I had been to one that Gordon Lippitt had done; Gordon Lippitt and Brad Morrison were great influences for me. I did the first 5-year plan, the first multi-year plan for the KAC and the first multi-year plan for the local assembly of arts agencies; we did them in tandem. The plans were done in tandem. I started them, and after I left, Jack Reed finished them. We did them in tandem. And since then, I went out there to do a visioning session. One of the most fulfilling things in my career was kicking off the KAC visioning session in Salina just a couple of years ago; it was jointly managed, completely jointly managed, by the Association of Community Arts Councils and the KAC. Whatever tensions there were between the personalities involved, they were absolutely working together to do the visioning and to conduct those meetings around the state. And they may yet do it differently in the future. The environment may change, the time may change, the relationships may change, but we kicked that relationship off. I tried different kinds of strategic planning with my commission; looking back on it now, I tried to move us to having strategic conversations, though we were still small enough that during the time I was there, I think I it was in my last year there, that for the first time every commissioner did not read every application. But during most of my time there, every commissioner read every application. But when it got to 160 it became too much. But when you had 60, 100, you could do that. And actually, because we could do it, it became what we did. So at the end of it we would have strategic conversations, like an Endowment panel. To my credit, looking back on it now, I actually invented some of these things (probably it’s stuff that other people had invented them before that, but I didn’t know that) – for instance, I did a planning session where we spent the whole time, the whole quarterly meeting – I’d made a form for each art form (visual art, music, drama, movement/dance) and I asked them what aspects of it they were satisfied with in terms of institutions, what professional experiences were available, what amateur experiences were available, by art form; what was available in schools, what arts education was available. I had 5-6 questions about each art form and tried to run the meeting where we systematically did that. It was very difficult. Nobody – including me – had ever done that before. They liked the idea of that, but there were other kinds of planning that were going to be more productive to us. About halfway through, I started talking about the vision for the state. And when Jack Reed finished the plan he did something that I didn’t do. I started the planning process, but the one that he finished, he actually wrote a vision for the state 10 or 20 years hence, describing KS as it would be, if it were successful. So my answer is yeah, we really did invest this. We had meetings around the state, we did it religiously. We had at least a meeting or 2 outside of where our office was, and considered it part of our planning process. It stuns me that

agencies even today don't do that sometimes, that whenever you have a meeting outside of your community, one of the things you do is, you invite community people to talk about what's going on there, what's distinctive about your region, what their aspirations are for their relations with you.

program development A great deal of conversation about program development.

fundraising No fundraising. Private sector fundraising was not something that we did. We did spend a lot of time talking about getting the arts promoted, which I don't really see here. Maybe you call that 'partnership building.' But our first chairman, Martin Umansky, he was the president of the ABC affiliate in Wichita. He had a guy to did his promotion named Dick Cottam. And he and his staff member wrote a book about promoting the arts in KS. So much what we had done starting local arts agencies had to do with promotion, that was a big thing for us. Our really big staff task was building the artist-in-residency program, and forming local arts agencies, those were our big staff things.

partnership building (with other government agencies, with other types of nonprofits, with private sector, with arts/cultural agencies at other levels of government)

Generally no. But I spent a significant large portion of my time physically walking into other offices. One thing I learned was, a big breakthrough in our lobbying, was with the KNEA lobbyist. That was the largest union in KS. The largest union in KS was the teachers' union. When I explained to them about artists in residence in schools, he set up major appointments with legislative leaders and a couple of times came with me. Just so the chair of an appropriations committee would know that it had the seal of approval... He wasn't going to make an appointment with people and talk about it [END OF SIDE 2, TAPE 1][not on tape, from my notes: but he opened doors.] We didn't have a programmatic connection with historical society. The humanities people, yes, with the state humanities council, I had a very good relationship with the state humanities people. My counterpart, Marian Cott, was there a long time and we started some joint things where we thought it would be a great idea if they not only had this experience but they talked about it! So we did some things together.

3. *Did your time use change in any noticeable way from the*

beginning to the end of your time at the SAA?

Once we moved to Topeka it changed because we were so much more visible in the capitol (not only my time changed, but I shaved!). Because we were visible, we were actually visible. We could manage a legislative day, worked with the Assoc. Of Local Arts Agencies. So the organized and systematic communication with the legislature, that changed after we moved there.

K. What else – information, stories – can you tell us that you think people in the future ought to know about your agency, or the SAA world in general?

The conversation that you need to have with your constituents is that it's always all new. I've always been stunned by having conversations with staff where they say, "We did that at our last annual meeting, we can't do it again," or "but our newsletter, 2 years ago, we had a newsletter with that theme." But it's always, it's always all new. I don't know if I'm influenced by the fact that there was a time when it was literally new for the field. And now it's new for a portion of the field on a rolling basis. But I'm always very alive to that new portion, among what we now call our authorizing environment. Also, there is always a large portion of people out there who need to get all the way back to "arts are good." A person who hasn't had an experience of the arts, and isn't aware of the growth of infrastructure in the arts in the US, is the same in 2005 as they were in 1970 in terms of where you have to have the conversation with them, and sharing the experience. That's the other thing: it's always about sharing the experience, no matter how sophisticated we get, and how much infrastructure there is. The long-term piece of business that has never been adequately done. I believe that people believe that they have accomplished some things and tested some things that I believe have never been accomplished or tested. Here's a very simple example: the shared notion among management, staff and governance of an arts organization that they will do advocacy by sharing their experience, is a notion that has never been tested. That is, whatever leadership that the state arts agencies, local arts agencies and the NEA has provided, and it's been amazing and substantial, the consistent messaging that every organization is in the business of advocacy, just making the case for its own resources, and that the public sector is a subset of that, the consistent messaging that the way you win in the long run is to provide a unique experience. And that needs to be structured and interpreted constantly, and that what the research shows us is that people need to come into your place or you

need to go into their place, and that people that they care about need to share the experience and the value with them; and that their notion of all the other arguments that we have been documenting for a generation – that it makes a huge difference if they experience it and then say, “What are the public benefits?” – That is a completely different relationship than presenting them with the public benefits and them saying, “And the arts do this? Because other things do this, for the most part.” But that is a basic lesson. So when people talk to me about “Oh, we have to use this language, and we have to have this workshop, and these benefits document this and document that, and we’ve tried this and we’ve tried that” – no, we’ve never really tried sharing the experience in the way it needs to be done, to test whether the arts can make their case; and every experience that I have suggests to me that it WILL work, that the arts are more than competitive with other uses of the public and private dollar, when experienced.

The other thing is that we have never invested... here’s a lesson learned from the beginning. If you look over the history, you can see the enormous investment made in the production of art; we have never adequately done the thinking and analysis, and then aggregated the necessary resources, to significantly affect the distribution of art. Notably, in dance, crafts, independent media, independent literature, and chamber music. Probably other things, but there was no reason ever to abandon the experimentation with dance touring – to have abandoned that was a failure of vision on the part of the foundation and public sector community. The same thing is true of interpreting the value of the arts and the arts experience. What portion of grant-making enhances the moment of experience? And interpretation? So if you look at the most mechanistic paradigm of production, distribution, consumption, we need to be reminded that we’ve never tested our ability to aggregate resources and affect distribution. And we’ve never tested our ability to aggregate resources and affect consumption. And to give Dana Gioia some credit for putting an arts education component to every one of his initiatives – and how many of us have in the foundation world or in the public sector world?

II. Have you stayed in touch with the state arts agency field since you left your position as Executive Director?

A. If so:

1. From your experience, how has the role and the activities of SAAs

changed since you began your career?

[Jon is Executive Director of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies now.]

Yes. There is much to be proud of, that has to do with the building of infrastructure though I do believe that there is a great deal more community organizing ... I think that the local arts agency movement, the local arts agency as a structure may be less important than local arts agency networking. But I see an enormous need for agencies at the state level to say, "What do I need to accomplish by management" as opposed to "What do I need to accomplish by direct service delivery?" The simplest examples are the creation of local cultural districts. The creation of local arts networking (whatever form that takes), partnership building between the nonprofit and for-profit sectors at the local level, cultural districts of course – the connection between the training of artists and their employment which is a cross-sector issue. Definitely the connection between nonprofit and for-profit arts experiences (as embodied in festivals, maps, tours, market development, first nights, things like that) – are things that should be aggressively modeled and state arts agencies I believe have the resources to do that, to do leadership modeling. Pick a couple – not all of them – pick a couple that your state looks like they're ready for, and make that your initiative. I believe in initiatives – but I believe that they need to have more of an infrastructure component than we're seeing. I see great programmatic initiatives, especially from the National Endowment for the Arts. But the initiatives that I'm looking for the program that brings with it an infrastructure, or is baldly infrastructure building. I see some great European examples.... Massachusetts makes "Adams grants" where a nonprofit and a for-profit get together and make a business plan and get a grant. I don't understand why it isn't proliferating. Maybe it is. It seems to me that more state arts agency leadership in fostering local arts agencies, fostering local cultural districts, fostering some very specific kinds of partnerships. I look at Kohler – they have had an artist in residence in the for-profit world for a generation – I'm looking for a state arts agency that makes this a program initiative! That's an infrastructure-builder, and we already have the expertise in the residency program. There is a program in the northern part of England - the Northeast Arts Council to be exact - where if you're a graduate with a BA, MA or MFA in an arts project, they will pay you lb.2000 and pay a creative industry organization lb500 for you to work for them to work for 2 months, making up the deficit in real-life experience that most of our academic artists get. And people talk so much about our artists aren't prepared.... Now that we have all these social service components – are artists being trained to use them, and how

do we do that? I'm looking for leadership models. And certainly in literacy – literacy in literature, literacy in visual arts, literacy in theater – we have all the research that documents the stuff. And here is another example: We now know that - at least my research leads me to believe - that the most powerful thing you can do to advance arts education is to foster a community advocacy group that relates directly with the superintendent and the school board – I think it's been demonstrated. That's what Gaining the Arts Advantage documents, looking at 300 districts, here's your 13 factors and 6 of them are about reflective practice and 6 of them are about people in the right places and one of them – the pivotal one – is, is there a community advocacy group? That seems to be a ripe and ready initiative for a state arts agency: let's foster the community advocacy groups. We have staff work and grant work. Grant work needs to follow staff work.

One thing that is happening wonderfully out there that everybody needs to get honored and credit for, and that is the integration of the rationales. In other words, the things that were done piecemeal in the 90's – economic development, youth at risk, cultural tourism, strengthening communities, and youth at risk [*sic*] those 5 things built the budgets for state arts agencies in the 90's – doubled them. Now they're being integrated, so it's "Cool Cities," community development, the things you pointed out in Idaho, those are all integrated rationales. Now they are different, but the 4 that you mentioned are all highly integrative – education, economic development, community building and cross-sector leadership...that's going on, but it's going on in a big, diffuse way I think.

2. *From your experience, what skills/competencies do you think are most important to incoming SAA staff? To SAA leadership?*

For a person to have a great interview, an hour's conversation with about this, who is not a founder of a state arts agency but whose mother was, is Kelly Barsdate [*on the NASAA staff*]. When I was director of the Kansas arts commission, Kelly's mom was chair of the Alaska council. Barsdate is not a name that you forget! Kelly uses a term, "policy entrepreneurship." If we were going to name one thing at this point, it would probably be that. The notion that, it derives from the realization that you do not have the resources to implement the policy that you can envision. So your big work becomes putting together the configuration of vision and resources – which means that you have to make the policy case to others for your value. That particular skill, I would agree with Kelly, is at the core of what you need to be able to do. What you're able to do is still, and always will be, influenced by what you can envision, and

what you can actually think – your intellectual capability. And your personal skills.

3. *Would you pursue a career in SAAs/public arts management today if you were starting out?*

I think about it from time to time. At this point in my career, where I look at having a move left, or maybe two, or maybe a move and then consulting of various kinds, it would have to fit some personal criteria (the SAA would have to pay more than NASAA pays, and I have Terry's career which is in Washington DC as a federal lobbyist to deal with. So I'm kind of not at liberty to consider it.

[But in terms of this "entrepreneurial attitude," do you think you've got it?

]

Oh yeah. Ideally in one's career – and I don't think I have "managed my career" as well as I could have – staying at NASAA at 20 years is not the best management of my career - I stuck with something I loved, and it was easy to do that, there were circumstances that made it that (including personal – my folks and all that). I think that going in and out of something with a very large perspective, something a large management challenge – in my mind, I think of 3 kinds of positions: one in which you gain perspective (which NASAA has always been, and one of the things that has kept me here: the ability to grow perspective has always been in this position – a mine is now global). Another one is to really stretch your management capacity (which has been very limited here – I haven't managed 100 people, I've envisioned the use of hundreds of millions of dollars but I haven't been responsible for it. And there's managing a major institution, you know). And there's the ability to be reflective (which I had at a couple of points in both the field of literature and communications, and then the field of arts administration. My perspective, some skill-building ... I'd say, of the three, I have done a better job of managing my growth in perspective than I have in managing my decision-making and management capabilities or my reflective capabilities (because though I do reflect a lot, there is no written record of it. I never even wrote the book on community development that I had outlined after having started 30 or 40 arts council).

4. *Has the field lived up to its promise? Why or why not?*

I'm trying to think of what my answer would mean. It's certainly accomplished things that I couldn't envision. So in that sense from my perspective, it's more than lived up to its promise. On the other hand, I envision it accomplishing

many things in the future, and I envisioned it accomplishing some things by now that it hasn't.

[Such as?]

Well, I've been thinking about this; it's been 20 years, and I have to reflect on this in my annual meeting. SAA's in their entire existence, they used NASAA once at their instigation to combine resources and get something major done, and that was hiring Tom Birch to save the NEA – they all envisioned it, chipped in, did it and it came from their movement. Now, they combined resources and I raised \$1 million through NASAA to do statewide arts education advocacy in 1995 and used the vehicle of NASAA to do that, but I did that; that came from their Executive Director, and the arts education partnership came from their Executive Director. And the cultural advocacy group came from the Association leadership. And the first Ad Council campaign came from the group of associations in the arts and humanities – the national cultural alliance. And National Arts & Humanities Month came from the executive leadership of the associations. But the membership, the SAA's, have not convened and said, "Let's do this." In fact they respond to programmatic leadership from the NEA - we have brainstormed putting things on the table (I think Challenge America grew out of a conversation between the NASAA board and Bill Ivey and Scott Shanklin-Peterson in which we brainstormed that the areas in which we would combine our resources most productively would be either community development, multiculturalism or arts in education. I spent a strategic board meeting with Bill Ivey involved, his first week as Chairman of the NEA. I had been with him the weekend before at a foundation retreat, so we had identified common areas.

[But he was the one that did it.]

He and Scott, that put programmatic form. But the SAAs haven't come together and said, "We have this common vision for access to the arts in the US and we're willing to chip in this." In fact when I have asked my board if there is anything they would like their agencies or their staffs to combine to accomplish, it's usually, "Don't commit the membership to something, it's not what we want NASAA to do." I expected the field to move more quickly, using its associative powers to literally combine resources. There was a time when 7 SAA's went on an experiment supporting individual artists; I'd have thought that that would be a breakthrough and that there's be many more combinations like that. It hasn't really happened. What HAS happened is that we have become, through NASAA, a learning community. Right now, I believe, there are a couple of

important things in process. For instance, the next big thing that we are planning here on staff, is connecting public value with strategic planning. Because “public value” is current now in vocabulary. NASAA has of course been talking about this in other language for my 20 years certainly, but this language works; but I don’t see yet its effective incorporation in a general way in the strategic planning processes. In fact, relatively few SAA’s in my observation actually do visioning as a start, which is where that connection has to start. Very few of them even use their meetings around the state very effectively which I’m sure you’ve experienced in your consulting. They still start off with the notion of having 9 meetings around the state, and it takes a while to get to, “What shall we do with them?” So the integration of strategic planning and the notion of achieving public value is a big thing that is starting now, and I do expect it will go forward. I expected long before now the entire field to have figured out some things about distance learning. 20 years ago, the thing I was going to do the next year would have been a graduate program using workplace learning connected with my university. And it astonishes me that it is not commonplace in the field at this point. That’s not a failing of SAA... Also, one could reflect that this is the first year that public agencies are members of Grant makers in the Arts and I’ve been trying to foster that connection for 15 years. It’s now quite a healthy relationship and we’re going to look at arts education as a laboratory. And the other thing that I hope will evolve is the capability of NASAA to foster laboratories – meaning the multi-state testing of a strategy of a programmatic idea which we’ve simply been under-resourced to do. Our in-house conversation about our next big move has to do with an entity or division or something, a center or something like that, that functions as a learning lab. I’m very excited about that.

B. If you have NOT stayed in touch with the field, why not?

III. Think about the time when you were starting your work with SAA’s. What have you changed your mind about, if anything, from then to now?

IV. Do you have a single piece of advice for a young person entering the field of public sector arts administration today?

There’s a couple of things, and I always realize when you come down to things like that – I’m going to answer this in a really roundabout way: A friend of mine

has just sent me Steve Job's commencement speech at Yale in which he identifies 3 incidents in his life and what they meant to him and what he recommends as a result. I could also see that the opposite things are just as good advice. For instance, he dropped out of college and that made certain things possible for him which he would not have done if he'd stayed in. On the other hand, there are things that I see in the advice of other great successes that only come from periods of reflecting learning, that are influenced by mostly outside. The reason I mention this is because, my advice to somebody would be:

Think of yourself as a consensus builder, and focus on the things that last. Focus on building consensus, focus on getting one more than the little bit that you need to accomplish, you have to get that mass to get something done.

The other one is, Go for the things that will outlast you – and those typically are infrastructure, though sometimes they are institutionalized relationships.

I'm much impacted by the metaphor that Bill Ivey used, watching Dana follow him, and by my own experience watching my successor follow me at the University of Illinois: the metaphor is, you build a castle in the sand, and then a big wave comes. It has something to do with the ongoing relationship between sand and water! Which is my metaphor. It's not going to be your castle. It has to do with the way the currents interact.

V. Information about you:

A. Education

- 1. Educational Level (has, ba, some grad, ma, PhD)*
- 2. Major-field*

BA in English, Creative Writing – City University of NY

MA in literature - Purdue

PhD (1997) – U of Michigan

[Was your PhD in public policy?]

Effectively it was. It was out of an English department; it was not possible for me to go back and take all – I'd had an undergraduate political science course

and an undergraduate economics course. No graduate course in any of those things. So it was an English department, but about a public policy question: a proposal for literary activity in the US – If we cared about participation in literary activity, as defined by the census (creation, performance and attendance), if we cared about those things, what would we do as a matter of policy? And the first half was going back and analyzing the influential factors, their strengths and their interaction; and the second half is not a plan but what the components of a plan would be and how you would go about doing it.

B. What skills/competencies did you have did you bring to your leadership position at an SAA? How had you acquired these skills? (Experience, professional development training, formal degree education)

I communicate precisely; my communication skills are really very good in all forms – written and verbal.

I've really presented myself as a vehicle. My sense of fulfillment, my brand of ego comes from the trust and investment of others. I am very outer-directed – I am not a loner, I have no fun alone, I don't enjoy doing anything alone, and my need to please makes me very sensitive to the needs of others. My fulfillment derives – it's a match – it's not something that somebody chooses, I don't believe I've chosen to be this virtuous person, but I do think it's been a virtuous match where I have really wanted to be the vehicle by which people are pleased and things are improved.

And I've used all my powers; my intellectual powers are considerable (I saw my "genius IQ" in the 3rd grade; I went behind the teacher's desk and I saw what everybody's was, and I knew that I was reading at the college sophomore level when I was in the 3rd grade, and I knew whatever I would do, whatever field I chose, that I would have the powers to excel in it. Again that's not something you can take credit for, but I think that I've been prepared for leadership in the public sector. And actually more for leadership in the public sector than for leadership in the arts. I was not particularly privileged in my arts background.

But I would say that my needs to please, my intellect (people have always said that they think of me as a thinker, my analytic abilities and that's really helped in figuring out policy alternatives). Somebody who has had my positions doesn't have to have had precisely the things the things that I had, but they worked for me.

C. Work Experience

[Below is paraphrased somewhat]

BA Purdue and working for Stanley H Kaplan 20 hours/week, tutoring both during junior high, and during my BA and MA years (I had expected I would be a teacher – my life has been preparation for teaching – in fact a genius teacher in the 2nd grade had me teaching another child to read; so I knew that teaching was the most wonderful thing I would ever do. I knew my life preparation for teaching. I made choices as they enhanced my ability to teach)

MA with teaching assistantship; teaching fellowship and master teaching fellowship (was appointed by faculty, then elected by peers, to be the master teaching fellow who taught teaching assistants) at Kent State Wichita State, taught in honors college because I had so much teaching background – it was a unique position as a first year faculty member; I taught communications (including logic and rhetoric) and survey Courses, too

Kansas Arts Commission: Community Development Coordinator; really Assistant Director for Community Development, than Executive Director Sangamon State University (now U of IL at Springfield) – tenured as full professor of public policy and administration which I'm very proud of and one of the reasons I went there was because teaching was as important as research and publications. *[This would have been about 1975]*

Children's Museum in Denver , Executive Director (was my sabbatical year)
I took this job with the intention of staying there, but it didn't work out for Terry.

NASAA, February of 1985; still there

1. *Specific arts management experience vs. non-arts management experience*
2. *Did you work for a SAA either before or after your time as Executive Director?*

3. *Did you work for a public sector agency – not an SAA – either before or after your time as Executive Director?*
4. *It may be necessary for us to just ask them to make a list of their work experience in chronological order – no need for years - including the SAA, and then for us to categorize – jotting one of these categories after they have named the job:*
 - private sector management
 - government agency management
 - gallery/performance group
 - fundraising/grant administration
 - performer/critic/writer
 - lobbyist/advocate
 - nonprofit sector experience
 - elected office holder
 - arts education/teacher
 - academic
 - service organization experience: national or other

Work Chronology: above

- D. *Do you pursue any art form? Which? [not on tape, but he is a poet]*
E. *Demographic information:*

1. *Gender M*
2. *Age range 60*
3. *geographic region he or she lives now Washington DC*
4. *political/partisan identification because of position, unwise to share*

I have enabled NASAA to be a learning community [he said this after the tape was off.]